

Non-govt teachers want separate pay scale

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called on the government to introduce a separate pay scale for non-government teachers in order to improve quality education by attracting meritorious individuals in the teaching profession.

The caretaker government should also allow teachers of non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas to participate in the upcoming local government elections, they added.

National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTF), a platform of eleven teachers' organisations, organised the roundtable on 'Education, National Budget and Ban on Teachers' Participation in Local Government Election' at the National Press Club in the city.

The speakers criticised the government for allocating inadequate funds in the education sector, breaking all the previous records.

Chief Coordinator of NFTF Prof Quazi Farruque Ahmed said the government allocates less than Tk 112 crore in the education sector against the last fiscal year.

"Traditionally, education sector gets priority in the budget. Last year the allocation for education sector was 14.19 percent of the total budget, while this year the sector gets only Tk 12.26 percent," he added.

Farruque further said, "Why does the government impose ban

on non-government teachers' participation in the local government elections? We will agree with the decision if we get similar salary and other facilities the government teachers enjoy."

Former education minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam said a separate pay scale should be introduced for teachers so that meritorious students become eager to enter the teaching profession.

Education and Human Development Secretary of Awami League Nurul Islam Nahid said this year education sector is the most neglected one in the proposed national budget for fiscal

2008-09.

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) former president AAMS Arefin Siddique said the government should immediately withdraw the ban on non-government teachers' participation in the upcoming local body elections.

Former state minister for education Nitai Roy Chowdhury, Workers' Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Bimal Biswas, Communist Party of Bangladesh Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Joint Secretary Nazmul Haq Prodhan also spoke at the roundtable.

Former state minister for education Nitai Roy Chowdhury, Workers' Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Bimal Biswas, Communist Party of Bangladesh Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Joint Secretary Nazmul Haq Prodhan also spoke at the roundtable.

Of the total budget, Tk 135.90 crore will be available from University Grants Commission as government grant while the rest Tk 16.10 will be managed from the internal income of the university.

Tk 121.07 crore (73.82 percent of the total budget) will be spent for salary, pension and other allowances of teachers, officers and employees while only Tk 23.60 crore would be spent for academic sector and Tk 16.93 crore for general and miscellaneous work.

Of the total allocation in the academic sector, only Tk 2.13 crore (1.29 percent of the total budget) will be spent for research while Tk 1.86 crore for buying and publishing books and journals.

Prof Faiz, also the chairman of the senate, stressed the need for being economically self-dependent to avoid outside interference and enjoy full autonomous power in executing dynamic and progressive activities in the university.

He urged the affluent guardians to help maintain a rational tuition fees for their children to pave the way for more ultra-poor students to have the facilities of the university.

Earlier, the budget was placed in the finance committee on June 17 and was approved by the DU syndicate on the same day.

A revised budget of Tk 155.22 crore for 2007-08 fiscal was also approved at the session.

The 104-member senate body is currently running with 69 members. Of them, a total of 45 members took part in the session.

Of the 69, the tenure of 35 teachers' representative will end after this senate session, and then it will run with only 34 members.

Chaired by Convenor of the parishad Chowdhury Khalequzzaman, they expressed the views that elections to different local bodies should be held as per the rules to be formulated by the Jatiya Sangsad under the constitutional provisions.

They also demanded the government to withdraw the state of emergency and the EPR without further delay to rescue the country from the ongoing crisis.

"The country is now passing through a crisis. In this situation, we call on all quarters, including the political parties, army and civil administrations and the judiciary, to play an active role."

The speakers said, "It is now inevitable to withdraw the emergency.

Prof Quazi Farruque Ahmed speaks at a roundtable at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

ning, took a number of decisions regarding restoration of democracy and emergency power rules (EPR).

They urged the EC to refrain from holding the local body elections and demanded for an acceptable decision in this regard after taking into consideration all the democratic powers and organisations.

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PHOTO: STAR

LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS

Professionals concerned over govt, EC's unilateral decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Peshajibi Samanoy Parishad, a platform of professional bodies, have expressed their deep concern over the unilateral decision of the government and Election Commission (EC) to hold the local body elections, bypassing opinions of the people, says a press release.

They feared that such steps might be complicated further and destabilise the ongoing situation.

The members at an emergency meeting of the co-conveners said, "This may further uncertain a free, fair and acceptable parliamentary election the government is committed and the people aspired for."

The meeting, held at the Dhaka University Club on Tuesday eve-

Int'l Children's Festival to be held in Dhaka this yr

UNB, Dhaka

A delegation of three children's organisations called on Chief Adviser Fakhrudin Ahmed yesterday to formally apprise him of the International Children's Festival to be held in Dhaka this year.

The objective of the International Children's Festival 2008 is to make the children and juvenile aware about the adverse impacts of climate change and the ways to offset the impacts.

The 13-member delegation comprising members from Kanchi Kanther Asar, USA, Kanchi Kanther Asar and Kanchi Kantha Foundation, Bangladesh, requested the chief adviser to inaugurate the festival.

The chief adviser thanked them for taking such an important initiative and choosing the topic, saying that adverse impacts of climate

change would affect the future generations severely.

As the delegation members sought government cooperation, Fakhrudin said he would ask the ministries concerned to look into the matter and extend their cooperation.

They also informed him that they want to launch a TV channel styled 'Kids Vision' in Bangladesh.

Justice Golam Rabbani was present at the discussion as the chief guest while NGWF President Sayeeda Sarker chaired the programme.

Convenor of National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Electricity and Port Engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah, Prof Nasrin Khandker of Dhaka University, Abdul Mazid Mallik, former director of Karitas Training Institute, Subol Sarkar, president of Bangladesh Landless Association, and Amirul Haq Amin, general secretary of NGWF also spoke.

Justice Golam Rabbani said, "The owners of the garment factories are cashing on the labours and efforts of the workers, but the workers had long been deprived. Many workers don't even get their due salaries. Some even behave with them as if the workers were their slaves. Struggle should continue to build a society where the workers themselves can set up garment factories on their own," he said.

Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah said that the present government is a pro-capitalist one that doesn't pay heed to the demands of the working-class people.

Struggles should continue to realise their just demands, he added.

The NGWF leaders said that the government should have held pre-budget dialogues with the representatives of garment workers, as the government had sat with the leaders of FBCI, BGMEA, BKMEA and other chambers of commerce and industries.

Criticising the budget speech delivered by the finance adviser, they said that the garment workers contribute to 76 percent of total exports, but the finance adviser in his address did not mention their contribution.

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Kamal Lohani was also the first president of Bangladesh Sangbadik Union, the director of Bangladesh Press Institute and the director general of the Shilpkala Academy.

He is still playing a leading role in the socio-cultural movement of the country to build a democratic and progressive society.

Today is the 75th birth anniversary of Kamal Lohani, a veteran journalist and cultural personality, says a press release.

Born in the village Shantala under Ullahpara upazila in Sirajganj on June 26 in 1934, Kamal Lohani played a significant role in different sociopolitical and democratic movements, including the Language Movement and the liberation war.

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